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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES APPLIED BY PRINCIPALS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study compared total quality management strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 13,559 respondents (3,878 teachers in public and 9,681 teachers in private) secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The sample size for this study consisted of 688 respondents (204 teachers of public and 484 teachers of private) secondary schools using drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled ''Total Quality Management Strategies Applied by Principals for Quality Assurance Questionnaire (TQMSPQAQ)'' were used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts who were lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Using Cronbach alpha for test of internal consistency, the co-efficient for Clusters I-V of instrument were 0.83, 0.81 and 0.77 respectively and overall coefficient was 0.80. The researcher together with five research assistants collected data for the study using the direct approach method and 98% return was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The results of the study showed among others that the incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance are similar in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. It was also found that the monitoring and professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. Also, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the monitoring and professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that school directors should provide supports needed by principals to organize professional development programmes for teachers to enable them have the same opportunity of advancing their knowledge and skills like their counterparts in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Total, Quality Management, Principals, Quality Assurance, Incentive, Monitoring, Professional Development

AJEMATES
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Introduction

Education is an instrument for equipping individuals with skills and knowledge to optimize their potentials, foster social cohesion and improve their well-being. Education has also been recognized as indispensable tool for promoting personal development of individuals to enable them effectively participate in societal affairs for the fulfillment of their economic, social, civil and political responsibilities towards the society. Okechukwu and Oputa (2021) opined that education is an important instrument for the development of the individual and the society as it is a weapon for tackling poverty, illiteracy and disease. Individuals could discover their talents, develop right habits and values through education received in formal setting such as secondary schools.

Secondary education is the second stage of formal education designed to prepare the students for tertiary institutions of learning and career life. Similar to this, Okoye, Asogwa and Ugbala (2023) asserted that secondary education is the form of education that is acquired after primary education which focuses on the overall development of learners and prepares them for higher institutions. It provides opportunity for primary school leavers to acquire skills for self-improvement and also make meaningful contributions to the development of the society. Secondary schools are categorized into public and private schools.

Public secondary schools are post primary institutions of learning owned, funded and managed by governmental agencies and bodies. Public secondary schools largely depend on Government's grant and allocation which is revenue generated from taxes for daily operations. To buttress this, Bibire and Abdur-Rahman (2021) noted that public schools are schools owned, administered and funded by the local, state or national/ federal government or public authority or agency through the taxpayer's money. On the other hand, private secondary schools are post primary institutions of learning owned, funded and managed by an individual, group of individuals, religious bodies and non-governmental organizations. According to Ibezim and Ikediugwu (2023), private secondary schools are established and controlled by individuals, religious bodies and non-government establishment among others. Private secondary schools are learning institutions set up by individuals or non-governmental organizations to primarily make profits (Atanda and Wambugu, 2022; Anachuna, Obi and Unachukwu, 2021). Private secondary schools wholly or partly rely on tuition fees and levies collected from students for their daily operations. The chief administrative officer of either public or private secondary school is principal.

The principal is the executive officer in charge of managing the resources of a secondary school to attain predetermined educational objectives. According to Umeze (2022), the principal is at the helm of affairs of developing and implementing the educational programmes, provision of

facilities and creating conducive teaching and learning atmosphere for realizing the targeted goals and objectives of secondary education. Onafowope, Egwunyenga and Oweikpodor (2023) noted that principal is the chief administrator who is saddled with the responsibilities of inspecting teachers' lesson notes**,** ensuring that discipline is maintained in the school environment and students are being taught in secondary school. Summarily, the principal is responsible for the daily administration of every secondary school.

There are many managerial strategies that could be adopted by principals to ensure smooth daily administration of secondary schools. Nakayama (2018) highlighted managerial techniques and strategies for smooth administration of an organization as follows: Benchmarking, SWOT analysis, Scenario analysis, Product Portfolio Management, Total quality Management (TQM), knowledge management and balance scorecard. Onyali, Nnebedum and Ejesi (2020) noted that one of most effective managerial strategies that could be adopted by principals of secondary schools to ensure smooth administration of secondary schools is Total Quality Management (TQM).

Total quality management is a way and process of ensuring commitment of members of staff towards improving the efficiency of an organization. According to Olabimtan and Olopete (2024), TQM involves putting in place processes and systems which will ensure that every aspect of an organization's activities is aligned to their needs and objective. TQM is processes that integrated cooperation and commitment of every staff towards continuous improvement of an organization. Amadi (2023) described TQM as one of the best tools for promoting continuous improvement of the daily affairs of school system for effective achievement of educational goals and objectives. Amie-Ogan and Sunday (2021) noted that efficient use of resources to actualize set educational goals can be enhanced through TQM strategies.

Total Quality Management (TQM) strategies are mechanisms put in place by administrators to ensure continual improvement of daily activities of an organization. Similar to this, Chuktu (2021) defined TQM strategies as the means of ensuring continuous improvement in running all aspects of institutional affairs by utilizing available resources, supporting and ensuring staff commitment towards actualizing set goals. Ahmad (2022) defined TQM strategies as techniques of promoting continuous improvement based on continuous learning and adaptation to changes in operational methods for achieving sets goals. TQM strategies are approaches for operating the daily affairs of learning institution in such a way to meet the dynamic demand of education and satisfy the learning needs of students. Onyali, Nnebedum and Ejesi (2020) defined TQM strategies as administrative methods that are geared toward continuous improvement of staff skills, knowledge and performance at a minimal cost. Operationally, TQM strategies are holistic approaches of influencing and supporting members to ensure their commitment towards continuous

improvement of school affairs and attainment of predetermined educational objectives.

TQM strategies are the approaches of ensuring commitment of every staff and emphasize adapting to changes and new improved methods of performing tasks for continual improvement of daily affairs of an organization. Chuktu (2021) posited that TQM strategies ensure that every staff is committed towards the improvement of work culture, processes and services for the success of the organization. Several scholars have identified various dimensions of TQM strategies. Ahmed (2020) highlighted TQM strategies as follows: top management support, customer focus, teamwork, training, continuous improvement, communication and decision making. Similarly, Hassan, Mukhtar, Qureshi and Sharif cited in Shanmuganathan and Sathishkumar (2019) listed TQM strategies to include: incentive and recognition system, monitoring, continuous improvement, top management commitment, employee involvement and customer focus. Wolor and Musyaffi (2022) outlined the dimensions of TQM strategies to include: staff professional development, empowerment, teamwork and compensation improvement. The study is interested in five dimensions of TQM strategies namely: incentive, monitoring, staff professional development, teamwork and communication strategies.

Incentive is the stimuli that drive members of staff for greater action and performance in the workplace. Amadi and Williams (2022) defined incentive as payments or concessions to stimulate additional effort of staff to generate greater output or performance. It is the benefits received by teachers in recognition of diligence in discharging their duties and also their persistence in exhibiting desirable behaviour. Incentive strategies could be applied by principals by involvement of teachers in decision-making, praising, recommending them for promotion and provision of the relevant facilities and equipment in workplace among others. Adeniran and Nokoe (2022) identified incentive strategies to include: facilitating staff annual leave with pay, rendering of medical services to staff, granting work autonomy to develop their confidence, provision of sporting facilities, making available of teaching materials, encouraging participatory decision making and appreciating suggestions of staff. The teachers who receive incentive tend to put in extra effort in performing their duties in secondary schools. The teachers who receive regular incentive are likely to effectively discharge their duties with or without monitoring of their activities.

Monitoring is the process of watching, collecting and analyzing activities of teachers to ensure that laid down procedures are followed. According to Vipene and Kerene (2021) defined monitoring as activity of tracking the progress made by an entity or a phenomenon against a planned task. Principals monitor the activities of teachers to ensure that they judiciously execute their duties and avoid repeating similar mistakes for attainment of high performance standards. According to

Onyali, Nnebedum and Ejesi (2020), principals' monitoring strategies entail observing teachers' classroom instructional delivery, vetting their marking schemes, checking their lesson notes and their level of participation in staff meeting, school assembly and extra-curricular activities among others. Monitoring strategies involve checking school attendance of teachers, inspecting their lesson notes and observing the implementation of weekly scheme of work to ensure coverage of syllabus. Otieno and Magoma (2022) noted that monitoring strategies of principals involve checking whether continuous assessment reflect what has already been taught, inspection of students' notes to ensure that their assignments are marked, overseeing learners' progress records, making sure that teachers adhere to deadline for marking of examinations and submission of students' results and regular evaluation of students' progress in every subject. Monitoring enables principals to observe the professional needs of teachers which form the basis for their training.

Staff professional development is the series of programmes organized for teachers to upgrade their skills and advance knowledge of carrying out their duties. According to Ofojebe and Kene-Chiedu (2020), staff professional development is all activities intended to increase the skills and capabilities of personnel in an organization. The principals could encourage professional development of teachers to enable them acquire knowledge and skills to match and cope with the various changes in the school system. Anachuna, Obi and Unachukwu (2021) asserted that staff professional development involves teaching personnel how to carry out their duties and assisting them in acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to be effective on the job. The various staff professional development strategies also include: sponsoring staff to attend workshop, seminars, conferences, refresher courses, group discussion, online courses and orientation among others. Training could provide opportunity for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills to attain quality assurance.

Quality assurance is the act of maintaining standards in programme and activities of an organization to achieve set goals and objectives. Egboka (2021) defined quality assurance as the process of managing school resources and programmes in an efficient way in order to ensure the instruction of students remain standardize at all time. Quality assurance is the systematic monitoring and controlling of the affairs of an organization to achieve excellent results. Olowe (2023) described quality assurance as the process of ensuring that educational programmes and services are effective and efficient to achieve stated goals. Orji, Kajo and Mando (2024) defined quality assurance as a process of ensuring effective resource input, refining the processes and raising the standard of output in order to meet the set goals. Contextually, quality assurance is the process of controlling activities to conform to established standard and meet the expectations of learning institutions.

The quality assurance in education is assessed through effective instructional

delivery, provision of infrastructure, regularly monitoring, training, interpersonal relationship, teamwork, effective communication, managerial effectiveness, high students' academic achievement and evaluation of school's activities. Makiya, Mnyanyi and Ngirwa (2023) asserted that the criteria for measuring quality assurance in education encompass various aspects, including learners' achievement, the quality of teaching, the alignment of the curriculum with learners' needs, the effectiveness of school management, supervision and active engagement of community in school activities. Also, Onuorah, Nwaru and Ezema (2023) noted that the indicators of quality assurance are curriculum development and implementation, staff training, monitoring, provision of infrastructure and amenities, student support services and evaluation among others.

The learning quality in public and private secondary schools tend to vary probably due TQM strategies of principals as reflected in the attitude, learning outcomes of students and performance of staff in Benue State. Joan and Msughter (2019) noted that teachers exhibit poor work behaviour like tardiness, absenteeism, delays in the marking of examination scripts and submission of grades in public secondary schools in Benue State. Tyokyaa and Nwaogwugwu (2021) observed that public schools which have professional teachers keep churning out students who cannot defend themselves academically, unlike the private schools where the highest percentage of teachers are not professional teachers and yet produce students who can defend themselves academically anywhere in the society. They added that these could be part of the reasons that parents prefer sending their children and wards to private schools than to sending them to public schools even with the overwhelming cost of the private education in Benue State. Also, Orji, Kajo and Mando (2024) noted that there seems to be a sharp decline in the quality of education system in public secondary schools which make some parents take their children to private schools within and outside Benue State. It seems that some students who patronize public secondary schools may not afford to pay the exorbitant fees and other levies charged by private schools.

There are some practices in public secondary schools that appear to be better than their counterparts in Benue State. Osogwu and Mbaba (2018) noted that principals tend to disallow free flow of information from bottom to top and make use of abusive choice of words in communicating to staff and students in private secondary schools in Benue State. The authors added that principals rarely organize orientation and encourage experience staff to mentor the inexperienced ones on private secondary schools in Benue State. Public schools tend to engage more in staff training and incentives arising from government education subvention compared to their counterparts in private schools who are interested in making profits than developing the members of staff. The students and staff of public and private secondary schools tend to engage in some forms of misconduct that could be attributed to the TQM practices of principals in Benue

State. Emaikwu and Ogwuche (2023) noted that bullying, examination malpractice, lateness to school, quarreling and fighting, truancy, smoking, noise making, alcoholism and drugs abuse are misconduct exhibited by students of public and private secondary schools in Benue State. It is against this background that the study investigated TQM strategies applied by principals for quality assurance public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

The incessant undesirable behaviour exhibited by teachers is inimical to the school improvement for attainment of set objectives and this could indicate the principals' application of TQM strategies tend to have some lapses in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. The researcher observes some of incessant undesirable behaviour exhibited by teachers are lateness, absenteeism, use of outdated notes in teaching the students in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

One wonders if these unpleasant behaviours exhibited by teachers could be attributed to the fact that they were not given adequate information about the expected work attitude, regularly exposed to training programmes or that the essential motivation required to spur them to greater commitment to duty and working as team is insufficient. The gap in communication gives room for rumour mongering and misunderstanding which create conflict in public and private secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. Public secondary school seem to have more qualified teachers and experienced administrators but one is concerned about the situation that parents prefer to send their children and wards to private schools which charge exorbitant fees in Benue State. One to wonders whether the TQM strategies could be responsible for nature of varying quality of students produced by public and private secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. It is based on these problems that prompted the researcher to carry out a study on comparative analysis of total quality management strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to compare total quality management strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. Specifically, the study sought to compare:

1. Incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.
2. Monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.
3. Professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

1. What are the incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?
2. What are the monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?
3. What are the professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the incentive strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the monitoring strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.

Research Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Benue State which is located in North Central geo-political zone, Nigeria. The choice of Benue State as the area of the study is justified by the proliferation of private secondary schools in the state amidst the economic situation in the country. The population of the study comprised 13,559 respondents (3,878 teachers in public and 9,681 teachers in private) secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The sample size for this study consisted of 688 respondents (204 teachers of public and 484 teachers of private) secondary schools using proportionate stratified sampling technique.

A researcher-developed questionnaire titled ‘‘Total Quality Management Strategies Applied by Principals for Quality Assurance Questionnaire (TQMSPQAQ)’’ was used for data collection. The instrument was developed by the researcher based on review of related literature and consultation of experts in educational management. It has two sections A and B. Section A elicits information on type of school of the respondents. Section B of TQMPPAQ has three clusters namely: I, II, III, IV to V. These clusters were based on the five areas of TQM strategies covered in the study. Cluster 1 contained 11 items on incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance; cluster II contained 10 items on monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance and Cluster III contained nine items on training strategies applied by principals for quality assurance. The instrument therefore contains a total of 30 items which are structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was subjected to face

validation by three experts, two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts suggested among others that ambiguous items should be simplified. Based on the suggestions, some items were reframed and negative items were added to the instrument. Thus, their suggestions were used to produce the final version of the instrument. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The co-efficient obtained for clusters I-V of the section B were 0.83, 0.81 and 0.77 respectively and overall coefficient was 0.80. Thus, the researcher considered the instrument to be reliable for the study. This is in line with Barbera, Naibert, Komperda and Pentecost (2020) who recommended that co-efficient value of 0.70 and above is adequate for any research work.

The method of data collection was direct delivery and retrieval approach. The researcher with the help of five research assistants. The research assistants were briefed by the researcher on the nature of the study and how to approach the respondents for data collection. A total of 688 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to 688 respondents (204 teachers of public and 484 teachers of private schools respectively) out of which 673 copies (201 teachers of public and 472 teachers of private schools respectively) were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 98% percent return rate. At the end of the exercise, copies of the questionnaire that were properly completed and retrieved were used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The decision criteria on the research questions are that any item with a mean score equal or above 2.50 indicated agreement, while the item with a mean score below 2.50 indicated disagreement. For decision on the hypotheses, if p-value is equal to or greater than significant value of 0.05 ($P \geq 0.05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected, but if the p-value is less than significant value of 0.05 ($P<0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Public and Private Secondary School Principals on the Incentive Strategies they applied for Quality Assurance.

S/N	ITEMS	Teachers in Public Schools (n =201)			Teachers in Private Schools (n =472)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Praise outstanding teachers during staff meetings	2.76	1.01	Agree	2.69	1.09	Agree
2	Find it difficult to give gifts to teachers	2.43	0.90	Disagree	2.47	1.05	Disagree
3	Issue commendation letters to outstanding staff	2.56	0.95	Agree	2.61	1.00	Agree
4	Grant work autonomy to members of staff	2.57	1.10	Agree	2.49	1.07	Disagree
5	Organise annual award ceremony to recognise outstanding teachers	2.60	1.07	Agree	2.71	1.00	Agree
6	Recommend teachers who met promotion criteria when due	2.81	1.09	Agree	2.56	1.02	Agree
7	Ignore teachers who effectively discharge their duties	2.45	1.05	Disagree	2.44	0.96	Disagree
8	Expresses gratitude to staff for their positive contributions through handshake	2.89	1.00	Agree	2.94	1.04	Agree
9	Sends thank you message to teacher who work beyond expectation	2.65	1.04	Agree	2.60	1.03	Agree
10	Give monetary prizes to staff that perform excellently	2.59	0.95	Agree	2.55	1.11	Agree
11	Finds it difficult to issue birthday presents to teachers	2.43	1.00	Disagree	2.47	1.05	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**2.61**	**1.01**	**Agree**	**2.59**	**1.04**	**Agree**

Table 1 show that mean ratings of teachers in both public and private secondary schools for in items 1, 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 are above 2.50 and thereby indicating agreement with the statements as the incentive strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance. On the other hand, the mean ratings of teachers of both public and private secondary schools for items 2, 7 and 11 are below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items. The mean scores of 2.51 recorded by teachers in private schools for item 4 is above 2.57 showing with the statement, while their counterparts in private schools recorded mean score of 2.49 which is below 2.50 indicates disagreement with the item.

The pooled standard deviation scores which stood at 1.01 and 1.04 for teachers of public and private secondary schools respectively revealed that their responses are

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

close to the mean indicating little variation in their responses. The cluster means of 2.61 for teachers of public secondary schools and 2.59 for their counterparts in private schools are above 2.50 indicating that the incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance are similar in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the incentive strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.

Table 2: The Summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on the Incentive Strategies applied by their Principals for Quality Assurance (n =671)

Group	N	X	SD	p-value	Df	Alpha	Remark
Teachers in Public Schools	201	2.61	1.01	0.26	671	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers in Private Schools	472	2.59	1.04				

Table 2 revealed that the p-value of 0.26 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the incentive strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.

Research Question 2: What are the monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Public and Private Secondary School Principals on the Monitoring Strategies they applied for Quality Assurance

S/N	ITEMS	Teachers in Public Schools (n =201)			Teachers in Private Schools (n =472)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
12	Visit teachers in classroom to observe their instructional delivery	2.53	1.01	Agree	2.77	0.94	Agree
13	Inspect the lesson plans of teacher	2.56	1.12	Agree	2.61	1.01	Agree
14	Maintain regular surveillance over the regularity of staff in school	2.40	1.10	Disagree	2.66	1.08	Agree
15	Check the progress of teachers towards coverage of scheme of work	2.60	1.06	Agree	2.81	1.02	Agree
16	Check the time in which staff report to school	2.32	1.07	Disagree	2.63	1.09	Agree
17	Inspect students' attendance registers to ensure that they are marked by teachers	2.51	1.02	Agree	2.70	1.01	Agree
18	Keep track of staff participation in organizing co-	2.30	1.01	Disagree	2.52	1.00	Agree

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

	curricular activities for students						
19	Observe the hours of teachers' departure from school	2.38	0.98	Disagree	2.58	1.06	Agree
20	Check the activities to ensure compliance to school timetable	2.55	1.03	Agree	2.61	1.07	Agree
21	Keep track of lesson notes of teachers to ensure that they are updated	2.54	1.02	Agree	2.57	1.04	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.47**	**1.04**	**Disagree**	**2.65**	**1.03**	**Agree**

Data analysis as shown in Table 3 revealed that the mean scores of teachers in public and private secondary schools for items 11, 12, 15, 17, 20 and 21 are above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the monitoring strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance. The mean scores of teachers in public secondary schools for items 14, 16, 18 and 19 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicated disagreements with the items, while the mean ratings of their counterparts in private schools are above 2.50 indicated disagreements with the items as the monitoring strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance. The cluster standard scores which stood at 1.04 and 1.03 for teachers in public and private secondary schools respectively indicated similarity in their responses amongst each cluster. The clusters mean of 2.47 obtained by teachers in public secondary schools is below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicated their disagreement with some items as the monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance, while their counterparts in private schools obtained cluster mean of 2.65 which is above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating their agreement. Thus, monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the monitoring strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State in favour of private schools.

Table 4: The Summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on the Monitoring Strategies applied by their Principals for Quality Assurance (n =673)

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	p-value	Df	Alpha	Remark
Teachers in Public Schools	201	2.47	1.04	0.00	671	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers in Private Schools	472	2.65	1.03				

Result in table 4 revealed that the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the monitoring

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State in favour of private schools.

Research Question 3: What are the professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 5: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Public and Private Secondary School Principals on the Professional Development Strategies they applied for Quality Assurance

S/N	ITEMS	Teachers in Public Schools (n =201)			Teachers in Private Schools (n =472)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
22	Encourage teachers to attend seminars to enable them gain specialized knowledge from experts	2.81	1.01	Agree	2.42	1.03	Disagree
23	Organize workshop for teachers to improve their teaching skills	2.92	1.03	Agree	2.35	1.05	Disagree
24	Encourage teachers to form study circle for updating their knowledge	2.62	1.10	Agree	2.51	1.02	Agree
25	Conduct orientation programmes for newly recruited staff	2.53	1.04	Agree	2.53	1.08	Agree
26	Assign less-experienced teachers to experienced ones for mentoring	2.64	0.94	Agree	2.54	1.09	Agree
27	Assist teachers to get study leaves for updating the skills	2.52	1.02	Agree	2.30	1.01	Disagree
28	Creating an on-line discussion platform for teachers to enrich their knowledge	2.40	1.02	Disagree	2.42	1.02	Disagree
29	Encourage teachers to attend conference to learn about latest innovations in teaching	2.57	0.91	Agree	2.44	1.06	Disagree
30	Engage teachers in job rotation for them to gain insight into different instructional tasks	2.54	1.10	Agree	2.58	1.02	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.62**	**1.02**	**Agree**	**2.45**	**1.04**	**Disagree**

As shown in table 5, the mean scores of teachers in public and private secondary schools for items 24, 25 and 26 are above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance. The mean scores of teachers in public secondary schools for items 22, 23, 27 and 29 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicated disagreements with the items, while the mean ratings of their counterparts in private schools are above 2.50 indicated disagreements with the items as the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance. The mean score of teachers in both public and private schools for item 28 is below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the item.

The cluster standard scores which stood at 1.02 and 1.04 for teachers in public and private secondary schools respectively

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.13 (2), September-December, 2024 https://ajemates.org

indicated similarity in their responses amongst each cluster. The clusters mean of 2.62 obtained by teachers in public secondary schools is above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicated their agreement with some items as the professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance, while their counterparts in private schools obtained cluster mean of 2.45 which is below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating their disagreement. Thus, professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State in favour of public schools.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State.

Table 6: The Summary of t-test Analysis no Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on the Professional Development Strategies applied by their Principals for Quality Assurance (n =671)

Group	N	X	SD	p-value	Df	Alpha	Remark
Teachers in Public Schools	201	2.62	1.02	0.00	671	0.05	Not Significant
Teachers in Private Schools	472	2.45	1.04				

It is revealed in table 6 that the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State in favour of private schools.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study revealed that incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance are similar in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. This agreed with the finding of Adeniran and Nokoe (2020) which showed that incentive strategies are applied by administrators in private and public high schools. The agreement with the finding could be attributed to the fact that both public and private school principals in different geographical locations can motivate teachers in putting their best to discharge their duties through incentive strategies. The similar incentive strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Benue State were praising outstanding teachers during staff meeting, issuing of commendation letters to outstanding staff, organising annual award ceremony to recognise outstanding teachers, recommending staff for promotion when due, expressing gratitude to staff for their positive contributions through handshake, sending thank you message to teacher who work beyond expectation and giving monetary prizes to staff that perform excellently.

The principals of public and private secondary schools probably adopted

incentive strategies to encourage teachers to hard work and remain committed to improve the quality of instruction deliver to students in the classroom. Further result showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the incentive strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State. This supported the finding of Adeniran and Nokoe (2020) which revealed that incentive strategies applied by administrators did not differ significantly in private and public high schools. This finding could be explained by the fact that incentives are needed by teachers to boost their morale and channel their energy towards effective execution of instructional tasks in public and private secondary schools.

The finding of the study indicated that monitoring strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State in favour of private schools. This is contrary to the finding of Osuji and Etuketu (2019) which showed that the difference existed in the monitoring strategies applied by school administrators of public and private secondary schools in favour of public schools. The disagreement with the finding could be possibly be connected to difference in time span and geographical location of the study. The members of staff in private secondary schools are better monitored by their principals than their counterparts in public schools in Benue State. The monitoring strategies which are better adopted by principals of private secondary schools than their counterparts in public schools were: maintain regular surveillance over the regularity of staff in school, check the time in which staff report to school, keep track of staff participation in organizing co-curricular activities for students and observe the hours of teachers' departure from school.

Many secondary school principals are very strict in monitoring the activities of staff than their counterparts in public schools in Benue State. Teachers who are observed to engage in undesirable behaviour are sanctioned by principals in private schools which is not very common in public secondary schools in Benue State. It was also found that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the monitoring strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State. This refuted the finding of Osuji and Etuketu (2019) which showed that there was significant difference in the monitoring strategies applied by school administrators in both the private and public secondary schools. The contradiction with the finding might be connected to difference in policy governing monitoring activities of staff in secondary schools in geographical locations of the study.

The finding of the study indicated that professional development strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. This is in line with the finding of Omenyi and Chukwunonye (2023) which indicated that there is difference in the academic staff professional development mechanisms adopted by university management in public and private universities in favour of public universities. The agreement in finding could be attributed to similarity in time span of the studies in

which government at various levels through education agencies organize periodic training programmes for staff. This finding showed that staff professional development strategies are better applied by principals of public school than their counterparts in private secondary schools in Benue State. The professional development strategies which are better adopted by principals of public secondary schools than their counterparts in private schools were: encourage teachers to attend seminars to enable them gain specialized knowledge from experts, organize workshop for teachers to improve their teaching skills, assist teachers to get study leaves for updating the skills and encourage teachers to attend conference to learn about latest innovations in teaching.

Teachers in public secondary schools are offered training opportunities offered by principals and other relevant agencies through funds made available by the state government to improve their teaching skills and quality of instructional delivery, unlike their private counterparts who possibly have limited financial aid options to provide academic staff professional development opportunities. It was also found that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the professional development strategies applied by their principals for quality assurance in Benue State. This affirmed the earlier report of Waqas, Muzammila, Siti and Mohd (2023) which showed that there was a significant difference of mean ratings of training of staff in public and private schools. This is contrary to the finding of Farooqi, Arshad and Qadir (2015) which showed that there was no significant difference in the use of training principle by the administrators of both public and private secondary schools. The time span difference of nine years might bring significant changes in education system and training needs of staff which could be responsible for the disagreement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that most of the total quality management strategies applied by principals for quality assurance differ in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. Incentive strategies applied by principals are found to be similar, while monitoring and professional development strategies significantly differed in public and private secondary schools in Benue State. There is no specific type of school that performed better than the other in the total quality management strategies applied by principals for quality assurance in Benue State. However, total quality management strategies applied by principals motivate members to staff to work together towards achieving predetermined goals in public and private secondary schools in Benue State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education should develop and present policy manual to principals to serve as reference point for providing incentives for teachers in public and private secondary schools.

2. Principals in public schools should embark on periodic monitoring of activities staff in their various schools so as to meet up with their counterparts in private schools.
3. School directors should provide supports needed by principals to organize professional development programmes for teachers to enable them have the same opportunity of advancing their knowledge and skills like their counterparts in public secondary schools.

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